

# Genealogy seminar focuses on finding family roots in Europe

Story & photo  
by Melanie Casey

**D**igging up one's family roots can be more than just a hobby – for some, it's a passion.

Simply put, genealogy – from the Greek *genea*, meaning family, and *logia*, meaning study – is the study of one's family history. But often, genealogists are much more than just curious family members: They're historians, detectives and judges as well.

Al Reed, an American of German descent currently living in Stuttgart and working at Headquarters, U.S. European Command, spoke at the Stuttgart Community Spouses' Club's luncheon Jan. 10 in the Swabian Special Events Center about the intricacies and difficulties of researching one's family history while living in Germany.

Many Americans have an ancestry that eventually leads back to Europe, so living in Germany may be a boon to those who want to dig into their pasts while here and discover long-lost relatives.

## "If I can do it, you can do it"

Although poring through centuries-old German records may be difficult, Reed said, "it's not impossible. If I can do it, you can do it. It's just a matter of getting used to it."

He said the best way to find one's ancestors includes the following:

- Start at the present and work your way back: Write down everything you know about your ancestors.
- Find older members of your family and interview them about what they know.
- Take out old pictures and identify everyone you can (write their names on the back, so someone doing future research will have this information).



**Al Reed of the Genealogical Association of English Speaking Researchers in Europe speaks to members of the Stuttgart Community Spouses' Club Jan. 10 on Patch Barracks.**

- Write everything down: What you were looking for, where you looked and what you found. Otherwise, you'll keep coming back to the same places.

- Use genealogy software, such as Family Tree Maker, Master Genealogist and Clues, to help keep you organized.

- Visit popular genealogy Web sites (such as [www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com), [www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com), [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and [www.genealogy.com](http://www.genealogy.com)) to access documents and databases. Keep in mind that some of these Web sites are subscription services and have a fee.

Reed, who's been doing research for more than 25 years, has discovered German ancestors as far back as 1521. He's also discovered that he is related to the Crosby (as in Bing) and Fonda (as in Henry) families.

## Research group can help

Another avenue for genealogists is to join the Genealogical Association of English

## Making the jump

Once you have "made the jump" (discovered from where and when your ancestor immigrated), you can begin research in the country from which he or she emigrated. Reed gave the following tips about researching German ancestors:

- ◆ German Church records are available beginning about 1550. They could contain a wealth of information such as birth, baptism, marriage and death dates.

- ◆ Beginning in 1867, the German government mandated that civil records be kept.

- ◆ Many churches have professional (i.e. paid) genealogists available to help.

- ◆ Visit [www.genealogy.net](http://www.genealogy.net). This is a German site that can be accessed in English and offers translation services and searchable databases.

Speaking Researchers in Europe, to which Reed belongs.

This group of amateur genealogists meets the fourth Thursday of every month in Heidelberg. "It's a shared thing. There's different people with different backgrounds," Reed said. "The more members you have, the more experiences you have to share."

The membership fee (\$10 per year for those with an APO address; \$15 for all others) includes a newsletter with genealogy tips and advice, access to the GAESRE research library on Sullivan Barracks, conferences and more. Club members do not have to live in Germany.

The next meeting is Feb. 26 and will include a discussion on census records.

For more information visit [www.Rootsweb.com/~eurgasr/](http://www.Rootsweb.com/~eurgasr/) or e-mail Reed at [thefinder4@yahoo.com](mailto:thefinder4@yahoo.com).

## Spouses' Club sponsors seminar, searches for new members

**T**he SCSC is looking for a few good members.

The Stuttgart Community Spouses' Club (formerly known as the Officer and Civilian Spouses' Club) is now open to all Department of Defense community members, including spouses, active-duty service members and contractors.

The group sponsors a number of philanthropic and social events, such as the Jan. 10 luncheon featuring amateur genealogist Al Reed.

Since the switch from the OCSC (for which membership was limited) the SCSC has seen its membership climb.

Last year, the OCSC averaged 60 members per function; this year, the average is 90, and with 200 members and counting, the organization continues to grow. "There's a lot of excitement," said SCSC President Lori Roop, "You can feel it. The board is working hard and having fun."

Annual dues (\$40 per person) and Ways and Means Committee fundraisers pay for the operation of the club itself.

All other funds – gleaned from donations and fundraising events such as the annual Spring Bazaar (March 19 to 21 this year) – are returned to the community.

In addition to awarding scholarships to graduating seniors, the SCSC also allows recognized private organizations to apply for funds twice per year.

Roop said the SCSC's mission is twofold: Socially, the club brings members together for events and fundraisers; philanthropically, the club helps support the Stuttgart community.

For more information or to join the SCSC, call Joan Jenkins at 07031-724-075 or e-mail [jumpy726@yahoo.com](mailto:jumpy726@yahoo.com).

## Citizen wins 7 'Ware' awards Editor, reporter, paper recognized as among Army's best in Europe

6th Area Support Group  
Public Affairs Office Release

**T**he 6th Area Support Group's command information newspaper was honored seven times in the 2003 Installation Management Agency Europe Region's Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Journalism Award competition.

The Citizen earned a first-place award in the Special Achievement in Print Media category for its Feb. 25, 2003, force protection special edition.

The paper also placed third in the Tabloid-Format Newspaper category.

Citizen Editor Hugh C. McBride was named the IMA-E Moss-Holland Civilian Journalist of the Year. McBride also placed first in the Sports



Casey



McBride

Article category, second in News Article and third in Commentary.

Reporter Melanie Casey was also honored, earning second place in the Contribution by a Contractor/Stringer (Writer) category.